

DATE: March 23, 2015
TO: Senate Committee on Health Care
FROM: Stacy Michaelson, Association of Oregon Counties
SUBJECT: HB 2546

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

As counties are the Local Public Health Authorities in Oregon, our members have a vested interest in issues related to tobacco use and prevention. As such, our members have officially taken a position in support of HB 2546.

From the standpoint of protecting and improving the health of our children, AOC supports the move to prevent the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors. With tobacco prevention being a public health priority, limiting access of minors to e-cigarettes is a clear move in the right direction.

Further, we support the standpoint that workers and the general public should have a right to a reasonable level of protection from potentially harmful second-hand exposure to electronic cigarettes. While studies are still being conducted on the effects of such exposure, when it comes to the well being of the public we support erring on the side of caution; the issue could be revisited should there be a definitive finding that second-hand exposure is not harmful. Barring such research, we believe that all Oregonians should be protected from unwanted and preventable exposure to carcinogens and other harmful chemicals in the air.

Finally, HB 2546 will aid in the enforcement of Measure 91. This bill bans the use of electronic inhalant delivery systems in public places, regardless of the contents of the device. Banning the device itself removes the need for business owners and law enforcement officers alike to determine whether an individual is using such a device for nicotine or marijuana. This bill will reduce ambiguity around what may be smoked where, and how, both protecting Oregonians from unwanted nicotine exposure and eliminating one clandestine manner of utilizing marijuana in public.

For the above reasons, we urge your passage of HB 2546 without amendments. Thank you